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ABSTRACT

The report explores the inner life of the Italian university system and describes the results of increased student access to a university that remains essentially elitist. It highlights the tensions and constraints that have placed Italian higher education in a state of suspended animation between mass entry and elitist structures. It is predicted that despite the problems confronting their universities, the Italian penchant for incremental change will probably be exercised. Articles on contradictions inherent in Italian educational policy (Guido Martinotti), possibilities for reform and innovation (Paola Coppola Pignatelli), and current educational planning (Giampaolo Bonani) are included. (Editor/MSE)

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THE EMERGING SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN ITALY: Report of a Seminar

BARBARA B. BURN

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INTRODUCTION

Barbara Burn's report on the ICED-sponsored seminar held in Rome, in July 1972, explores the inner life of the Italian university system and describes the results of increased student access to a university that remains essentially elitist. In this report students of comparative education will recognize the same insight and clarity Mrs. Burn provided in *Higher Education in Nine Countries*, a study prepared for the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education.

Mrs. Burn's report highlights the tensions and constraints that have placed Italian higher education in a state of suspended animation between mass entry and elitist structures. She concludes that despite the enormous problems confronting their universities, the Italian penchant for incremental change will probably be exercised. If she is correct, the Italian university should be attractive to educational planners whose function is to decide in advance what the increment is to be and how it is best achieved.

Guido Martinotti discusses the contradictions inherent in recent policies that have attempted to ease the tensions in Italian universities by limiting access to selected areas of study. His article shows that mass entry into the university system does not necessarily mean that the social selection function of the university has been democraticized.

Paola Coppola Pignatelli contributes to this volume by asking what reform and innovation of the university system is possible at the present time. Her conclusions are pessimistic, for reform is impossible without widespread support from other institutions. In Italy this requires not only the

industrial sector and unions but the immense civil bureaucracy as well. The current stalemate in the Italian universities is, she asserts, intricately woven into the political fibre of the country.

Giampaolo Bonani presents an overview of current educational planning and concludes that if agreement of broad principle on the social purposes of higher learning is forthcoming, useful guidance can be expected from Italian planners.

The solution to the crisis in Italian universities must reflect Italy's own situation, possibilities, and needs. If planning is to accomplish this, sound social science research is needed to support it. The problems do not appear radically different from those of other industrialized countries. But what is the implication for reform when the universities do not perform a significant credential function for industry? Would publicly funded vocational training at the post-secondary level merely shift costs from the private to the public sector? Will Italy experience decreased learning effectiveness as it increases access, similar to the experience of less homogeneous societies? Before effective educational planning can set priorities these are but a few of the questions that must be answered.

A wider view on the world can offer useful insight but it is unlikely to yield any ready made solutions. The Rome seminar, we believe, helped to generate an atmosphere of support and initiative for this kind of enquiry.

George W. McCurn
Director of Research

THE EMERGING SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN ITALY: REPORT OF A SEMINAR

Barbara B. Burn

Barbara B. Burn, director of International Programs at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, was a principal participant at the Rome seminar. Mrs. Burn is a consultant to the International Council for Educational Development on the modernization and management of systems of higher education.

The International Council for Educational Development (ICED), headquartered in New York City, and the Rui Foundation, a private foundation in Italy, jointly sponsored a two-week seminar on "The Emerging System of Higher Education in Italy," July 17 to 27, 1972, at the American Academy in Rome. Chaired by James A. Perkins, chairman of ICED, and co-chaired by Giuseppe De Rita, director of the Centro Studi Investimenti Sociali (CENSIS), the seminar's principal participants were:

James A. Perkins, chairman, International Council for Educational Development, New York
Robert O. Berdahl, Department of Higher Education, State University of New York at Buffalo
Burton Clark, Department of Sociology, Yale University

Barbara B. Burn, director of International Programs, University of Massachusetts
Giuseppe De Rita, director, Centro Studi Investimenti Sociali, Rome
Sergio Bruno, associate professor of finance, University of Cagliari
Franco Giocomazzi, director, Training Center, Montedison Co., Milan
Paola Coppola Pignatelli, professor of urban design, University of Rome
Giampaolo Bonani, Rui Foundation, Rome
Ladislav Cerych, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris
Hans Leussink, former Minister of Education and Science, Federal Republic of Germany

The purposes of the seminar were to: examine the emerging system of higher education in Italy; determine the way in which the Italian system is similar to and different from other systems; identify the priority problems in the future design and management of this evolving system; and seek agreement on possible constructive directions for future planning and action.

The seminar typically met for two sessions daily to examine particular aspects of higher education in Italy. A number of guest experts, listed in the Appendix, joined in these discussions. To supplement these regular sessions special arrangements were made to meet with the new Minister of Public Instruction, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, and with Mrs. Franca Falcucci, vice-chairman of the Commission on Education of the Senate. A visit was also made to the Rai Corporation (Radiotelevisione Italiana).

This report, prepared as a record of the seminar, does not purport to give a comprehensive exposition of higher education in Italy. Nor does the report summarize in detail

the seminar discussions. Rather it draws on and synthesizes those discussions with a view to identifying the most important and distinctive characteristics of Italian higher education, the principal problems and points of tension which confront it in a short term of five to ten years, and the forces and prospects for change both from within and outside the higher education system. Throughout an attempt is made to look at the system in the context of the trends and problems in higher education in other industrialized countries, especially continental Europe.

To the extent that the following report successfully presents some of the major current issues in higher education in Italy, it reflects the contributions made to the seminar discussions by its principal participants and especially by the Italian experts who joined in these discussions. The American seminar participants appreciated the opportunity to exchange ideas with their Italian colleagues and to learn from them some of the current thinking which may influence future reforms in the higher education system.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly in the long run, the seminar participants—Italian, American, and those representing other Western European countries—found the opportunity to look at problems of higher education in Italy an extremely rewarding experience. Participants gained an understanding of these problems which may serve as a continuing resource as Italy, like many other countries, attempts to cope with mass higher education.

Collectively the participants brought to the seminar a variety of backgrounds and experience. The atmosphere of concern and frankness pervading the discussions made it possible to examine problems comprehensively and openly. Participants found the experience personally and professionally rewarding. Without exception they agreed that such an intensive review should not be merely an isolated event. The

interchange of ideas and information initiated through the seminar should be continued through personal contacts and especially through the reconvening of the seminar in the future.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ITALY

A look at the present situation in higher education in Italy, or at developments in the last decade, inspires little optimism. Whereas the higher education systems in a number of Western European countries have changed significantly in the last decade, or appear to be on the threshold of major reform, higher education in Italy largely clings to traditional models and aims. In contrast to such countries as Great Britain and France, higher education in Italy still comprises only the universities, with little diversity in their basic structure and purposes, and with almost no differentiation in the content or duration of their academic programs. There is now, however, some differentiation in curricula as a result of the 1969 liberalization law. The growing need to involve a wider range of interest groups in decision-making and to endow decision-making bodies at both the national and institutional levels with more authority and resources has so far been mostly ignored. Also, unlike her major EEC partners, Italy has devised no new approaches to facilitate greater coordination and planning in higher education.

Italy is among the few countries of Western Europe which have neither curtailed the power of the full professors (chairholders) nor included students in university governance in any systematic or meaningful way. Unlike other countries subjected to rapidly rising enrollment demands, the university system in Italy has so far responded only minimally to such basic needs as increased staffing and enlarged physical facilities. Finally, most disquieting perhaps is the fact that nowhere within or outside the system are innovation or reform effectively encouraged or facilitated.

A university system usually fulfills certain cultural, economic, and social functions. However, the Italian university system is in deep trouble on all three counts. With respect to the cultural function, its performance in transmitting and advancing knowledge is limited mainly to the transmission of knowledge in the traditional university disciplines to 18-24 year olds. It has no role in continuing or recurrent education. It contributes relatively little research, a subject discussed in more detail later in this report. An unpublished study of 1967 by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development noted that universities in Italy lacked the resources necessary for research and were hampered in this function by problems relating to internal structure and to the status of researchers. These problems still persist.

Nor does the Italian university have any appreciable impact on the national economy. Some 66 percent of university graduates or *laureati* either go into public administration or become teachers in secondary education or university (41.5 percent), while only 13.6 percent enter industry. Thus, higher education is not contributing significantly to Italy's economic productivity. While some specialists for industry are produced, the universities appear more and more as organizations whose chief function is to feed themselves and the rest of the educational system.

Enrollment Growth

Attitudes and structure of the university system in Italy reflect a social function that is inconsistent with the social demands and expectations implicit in enrollment growth. No longer does the university serve effectively as an instrument for socialization: student numbers are too vast, basic resources too few, and the system too sclerotic and disassociated from national life.

The enrollment demand has been rising much faster than the system's capacity to handle it. Enrollments in courses

more than tripled between 1961–62 and 1971–72 while in approximately the same period public expenditures per student (in current prices) went up by only about one-third, the staff/student ratio has deteriorated, and the physical facilities of the universities have become even more overextended. Small wonder that a seminar participant, observing that a major university reform is only apt to be catalyzed by a crisis situation, remarked that such a crisis might well be precipitated if all students registered at the universities–and this includes many more students than those following courses–showed up at the universities at the same time. Chaos would reign.

The present challenge to the Italian university system is twofold. It must expand to cope with current and projected quantitative demand. At the same time it must redefine its role from the qualitative point of view. To establish new universities or to expand existing ones, agreement must be reached on the aims of the university in Italy. For example, what is its role in national economic development? Should a university serve the geographic region in which it is located? No consensus on such questions now exists either among the universities, the political elites, or between these two groups.

As will be shown in later sections, the university system in Italy is highly centralized. At the same time the professoriate has more power than might be supposed. However, the experience of the last decade, and especially the last several years, points to a gap between the authority to institute reform and the willingness to do so. Sufficient authority exists, at the level of the national government, although the political system has so far shown itself incapable of dealing with the need for reform. Nor do the full professors (*ordinari*) appear disposed to favor reform; it would dilute their power. Among the many imponderables of higher education in Italy is whether the apparent paralysis in Italian higher education is the result of the internal structure of the

university system and/or a reflection of the situation in the wider society.

The need for university reform has been recognized for some time. In the last ten years there have been various attempts, all unsuccessful, to reorganize the university through national legislation. The most recent effort was a reform bill, initially submitted in 1969, which passed the Senate in 1971. But after floundering in a sea of amendments, it failed of adoption in the Lower House. Its 106 articles would have determined every aspect of university organization and management in minute detail. Among its objectives were: the establishment of intermediate degrees; departmentalization of the faculty structure; opening participation in university governance to teaching staff below the level of *ordinari* and to assistants and students; requiring that professors devote themselves full-time to their university responsibilities; strengthening the position of researchers; and establishing a new system for the planning and coordination of university development. As of early 1973 the government was planning to submit a new university reform bill to the parliament. The new bill is expected to be much shorter and less detailed than the previous one and to set forth general principles according to which each university should reform its own statutes and structures. Given the fact that the centrist coalition government which took over in June 1972 has the thinnest of parliamentary majorities, instituting major reforms in higher education through national legislation is likely to be as difficult as it has been heretofore, even though the new bill will apparently be much milder than the last one.

The following sections treat in turn: the salient characteristics of higher education and its relationship to the total educational scene; students—their changing characteristics and expectations; the recruitment and career patterns of teaching staff and the extent to which they reenforce the status quo; the role of universities in research; problems of

university governance and administration; coordination and planning of higher education; present trends from elitism to mass higher education; forces for and deterrents to change; and finally, a comparative look at higher education in Italy at its present stage of evolution and suggestions for change in the future.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Central to the higher education system in Italy are three features: universities constitute the only type of higher education institutions; with only minor qualifications they are all state institutions; universities offer only one degree, the *laurea* (which gives the title of *dottore*) rather than different degrees to represent varying levels and kinds of academic achievement. These features give to the higher education system a built-in uniformity which excludes a significant diversification and motivates against change.

Undifferentiated Higher Education System

Italy is one of the few industrialized countries not having a differentiated higher education system. Unlike Britain and Germany, for example, Italy does not have a separate sector of post-secondary institutions to train elementary school teachers.[1] This function is handled in Italy at the secondary school level, contrary to trends in Europe in the last two decades. Nor does Italy have any counterpart to such institutions as the Polytechnics in Britain, the Colleges of Advanced Education in Australia, or the University Institutes of Technology in France, post-secondary establishments set up in the 1960s to offer less theoretical education than the

[1] As the *pedagogische Hochschulen* become part of the new *gesamt Hochschulen* in Germany, they will cease to constitute a totally separate section of higher education.

universities, as well as to widen access to post-secondary education. Thus, in Italy the university system lacks such stimulus to change as the existence of other types of post-secondary institutions may afford. Students seeking higher education have no option but to attend university.

The essential uniformity within the university system is also a deterrent to change. The same organization and functions characterize the 59 universities which comprised the university system in 1972, including the 13 universities, which although public are not state institutions, and the 3 private universities. The chief difference between these latter two types and the state universities is that they are financed through municipal and private funds, respectively, rather than by the national government. With respect to structure, academic programs, and basic policies they are—or strive to be—identical.

Variations among the universities chiefly involve the numbers of faculties and students, the latter ranging from less than 1,000 at 14 institutions to some 110,000 at the University of Rome. To a limited extent they vary in levels of prestige. The "central" universities tend to be more prestigious and better funded—those are located in the major metropolitan centers such as Milan, Turin, Bologna, Naples, and especially Rome. The so-called "peripheral" universities which are more remote from major cities tend to be less attractive to faculty and students. However, the problem in the Italian university system is not its domination by a few centers of excellence, but the fact that "massification" has pervaded the entire system. No Harvards or Oxfords have developed to lead the "academic procession" in Italy.

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Public Control

Even if an individual university wished to reform or innovate, it would encounter difficulty. As will be shown in later sections, government regulations control most aspects of university operations. The appointment and status of teaching staff, the establishment of new faculties, the determination of curriculum and the recognition of new disciplines, the requirements for the *laurea*, the system for internal decision-making, and the financing of the universities all fall within the purview of governmental control. Hence governmental approval is necessary for any significant change. Where innovation has been attempted in the last few years, the government has typically intervened to prevent it.

In other Western European countries the establishment of new universities has offered an opportunity for innovation. This has not been the pattern in Italy in recent years. Municipal authorities, in cooperation with business firms, trade associations, local banks, and other interests, have joined in private consortia, often with the encouragement of local members of parliament, to open new universities. Such local initiative is apt to pay off in prestige and revenue for the local authority and in voter support for local political leaders.

However, any attempts at qualitative reform are inhibited by the need for the institution to obtain eventual approval by the state, preferably before its first crop of students are ready to gain what would otherwise be a useless degree. With state recognition, the degree awarded by the university is recognized and the Ministry of Public Instruction assumes responsibility for financing the university. This need for state recognition produces universities that are even more traditional than the established universities. Thus the innovation outside the state university system is even less than within. Furthermore, as will be noted, initiation of new universities represents no real planning and often occurs in small towns where there is not even much student demand.

The chief exception to this pattern of uniformity is the University of Calabria in southern Italy, prepared to admit its first students in November 1972. Authorized by law in 1968, it is the first state-authorized university to be founded for many years, in contrast to the more chaotic mushrooming of "free universities" mentioned above. At Calabria University most students and faculty will be expected to be in residence. It will be Italy's first university with a limit on total projected enrollments, a departmental structure, and the first "campus university." However, even the founding of the University of Calabria does not really represent forces for innovation and long-range planning but rather political pressures having to do with the region and its development.

UNDIFFERENTIATED DEGREE SYSTEM

The *laurea* is the only university degree which certifies that students have completed a course of study, although the theoretically normal study period required for the *laurea* varies among faculties. Until 1969 there was very little choice of subjects within individual degree programs. Unlike such countries as Germany and France, Italy does not provide degrees representing different levels of accomplishment. Nor has the trend in many European countries to differentiate between undergraduate and graduate education had any impact in Italy. Essentially the universities are still geared to traditional notions of recruiting a ruling class rather than providing different types and levels of post-secondary education to fit the diverse abilities and aspirations of students and to meet society's varied needs for highly trained manpower as new occupations and skills are required.

In view of rapidly expanding university enrollments this elitist system no longer fits Italy's needs. Upper secondary school enrollments more than doubled in the 1960s and the percentage of secondary school graduates going on to university climbed from 70 to 75 percent ten years ago to nearly 90 percent today. In 1969, national legislation gave

access to any university faculty to all young persons earning a secondary school diploma. Formerly restricted to graduates of the *licei* (the academic secondary schools), university admission now is open also to graduates of the upper secondary schools that train elementary school teachers (*instituti magistrali*) and those that give a semi-professional or technical training (*instituti tecnici*). This reform is increasing the numbers of university entrants as there are no other post-secondary options in Italy. More significant, it is producing university entrants who lack the traditional humanistic preparation for university study.

The universities have no limit on how long students may remain enrolled. They may even remain enrolled without taking courses. Only about one-fifth of university students follow courses systematically. Of students enrolled at universities in 1969-70, 20.8 percent were not registered in courses and as many as one-third were following courses seldom or not at all. In a sense the lack of restrictions on study period offers students in Italy the flexibility which a structure of differentiated degrees provides in other countries. The less able students can study indefinitely. Nevertheless, half of all university entrants never complete their studies. Many do not intend to but only enter a university in order to postpone their compulsory military service or obtain the scholarships available to first-year students. The combination of the single degree program, the lack of any admissions requirements other than an upper secondary school diploma, the unlimited study period, and the inadequacy of university resources to cope with the student explosion are together reenforcing the elitism of the university system. Only the best students can succeed.

In the absence of short-cycle programs or an intermediate degree option, the less qualified students confront the prospect of either a protracted study period or admitting failure by dropping out. An undifferentiated degree structure may have suited a period when the university's social purpose

served only the small elite who entered the system. As Italy moved rapidly toward mass higher education, this system became increasingly anachronistic and costly in terms of university and human resources. The democratization of secondary education and of access to university, without any real reforms in the elitist university structure, is placing enormous pressures on this system, pressures it cannot long survive.

THE STUDENTS

Despite the dramatic increase in university enrollments, only about 18 percent of the 18 to 24 year old age group attend university. Furthermore, a large majority of students still come from the upper socio-economic levels of society. The fathers of more than 60 percent of university students are in the professions, management, or upper level civil service, or are self-employed. Only about 15 percent of entering students come from working class families, a somewhat higher proportion now than ten years ago, but the proportion of these students obtaining the *laurea* has increased very little. Nor does the national scholarship program appreciably widen university access to working class students. The scholarship system fails to finance many students needing it and provides inadequately for those who receive scholarships, thus reenforcing the elitist character of the universities, a situation common to other European countries as well. Of all students enrolled in 1970–71, 29.2 percent received scholarships: 500,000 lire per year for the 60 percent of university students not living at home, and 250,000 lire for those attending university in their home towns.

The relative lack of student violence in the Italian universities until 1967–68, and the fact that only a very small minority of students have been activists in the last few years, have been partly attributed by some observers to the elitist background of the vast majority of students and the

higher percentage of rightists in the universities than in Italian society. Counteracting this interpretation, however, is the fact that student radicals everywhere are of middle or upper class origin. In any case the ultra left-wing Student Movement (*Movimento studentesco*) which emerged with the university sit-ins and violence in 1967–68 was not a mass movement. But it has had profound effects.

As in other industrialized countries, the student disruption in Italy has added urgency to the need for university reform. Once it arrived in the late 1960s, student protest was more active in Italy than in many other countries, and has since engulfed the upper secondary schools as well. However, in the last several years the Student Movement has become fragmented and lost much of its following, even though small gangs of extremists, ultra-rightists as well as leftists, continue to spark violence, especially at the University of Milan. Initially taking the complete overhaul of the university as its chief aim, the Student Movement then shifted its focus to the reform of the entire society. Only in the last year or so leftist students have again taken problems within the university as a major concern.

Student malaise, aroused by overcrowding in the universities, shortages of teachers and classroom space, and the domination of decision-making by the "barons," has recently become exacerbated by the depressed employment situation for university graduates. With the wider access to university, it is alleged that increasing numbers of students enter university more motivated by the desire to obtain well-paying jobs in society than for the education to be gained. (According to a recent report of the Bank of Italy, the average income of *laureati* is double that of the graduate of intermediate secondary school.)[2] The availability of high

[2] *Bollettino d'informazione della Banca d'Italia*, No. 1, Rome, 1971.

level jobs has, however, failed to keep pace with the expansion in the number of *laureati*. As a proportion of the working force seeking their first job, *laureati* increased from 3.6 percent in 1968 to 5.8 percent in 1970, the actual number rising in that period from 12 to 20 thousand.[3] In 1968, one-fifth of *laureati* required as much as one and one-half years after obtaining their degrees before finding a job.

Employment figures reveal only part of the problem. Many *laureati* are underemployed and are forced to take jobs not commensurate with their qualifications or not in the fields in which they studied at university. Lacking other options, great numbers go into teaching, although it is neither their vocation nor inclination. For example, 67 percent of recent science graduates are teaching whereas only 30 percent actually want to teach. In the last few years 66.3 percent of all *laureati* have gone into the public service, including teaching, whereas only about one-third have had this aim.[4] The gap between past traditions of the *laurea* guaranteeing elite positions in the society and present realities is a growing political problem. Thus, the percentage of *laureati* in management or self-employed professionals, the most sought-after positions, declined from 30.2 percent in 1964 to 22.3 percent in 1970.[5]

Even if this situation is only a temporary phase (but not likely to be solved quickly—a survey by ISRIL estimated that

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[3] Centro Studi Investimenti Socioli, *V Rapporto sulla situazione sociale del paese*, Consiglio Nazionale dell'Economia e del Labora, Rome, October 6, 1971, II 8-9.

[4] Francesco Silva and Vittorio Valli, *Instruzione e sviluppo economico in Italia, esperienze storica e prospettive future*, Documento di lavoro No. 3, Politica Industriale, Milan, December 1971, p. 31 (unpublished).

[5] Patrizia Gelli, "Italy: the long wait prior to work," *SIPE*, Vol. III, No. 44, Instituto per la Cooperazione Universitaria, Rome, June 15, 1971, pp. 5-6.

by 1980 there will be an excess of 177,000 *laureati*) the unemployment and underemployment of university graduates may have serious political and social implications during the period when society's needs for qualified manpower are catching up with the supply.

THE PROFESSORS

A major obstacle to reform is the domination of the universities by the full professors, often referred to as "barons," a phenomena not peculiar to Italy. A self-perpetuating body, who in 1970-71 constituted less than one-tenth of all university teaching staff, the *ordinari* exercise tight control over recruitment and advancement in the teaching profession. Their hegemony is reenforced by the traditional dependence upon them of more junior staff. The professors also dominate the allocation of research funds to the universities.

Outside the universities the professoriate, still the most socially prestigious profession in Italy, typically participate in committees which recruit for the civil service, the judiciary, other governmental bodies, and for the professions, thus playing a critical role in the selection of the national power elite. The *ordinari* wield considerable power in the national parliament; some 80 members are full professors and 65 percent have a university degree. In the Education Commission of the Senate 5 of the 29 members are university professors (the rest are secondary school teachers). The Italian university has done an about-face since the days of medieval Bologna when the professors took orders from the students.

A somewhat contrasting picture is revealed, however, by examining the impossible burden imposed on the *ordinari* by the sharply rising student enrollments. Teaching staff expanded at only one-third the rate of enrollments between

1957 and 1966, and the staff/student ratio (excluding the assistants and including only students registered in courses) declined from 1/29 to 1/45 in that period.[6] Since then it has declined still further to about 1/60. It is virtually now impossible for an *ordinari* effectively to acquit his multiple responsibilities: examining students (in some extreme cases as many as 2,000 per year), teaching, directing the research and other work of his institute, and serving on university and external committees—and all this is on a part-time basis because the salary system and traditional career expectations compel the professors to combine their university duties with teaching at a second university or more frequently with one or more external jobs. The latter often overshadowed their professorial role and multiply their income manyfold. At the peripheral universities the part-time professor phenomenon is endemic, and how to attract the better professors to these universities is one of many unsolved problems. Just as it would be impossible for all enrolled students to fit into the lecture halls, so would the universities exhaust their supply of chairs, tables, and lecterns for the professoriate, should they become full-time at the universities.

Central to the perpetuation of the traditional structures and values within the universities is the system for recruiting the professoriate. There being no university degrees offered beyond the *dottore*, the aspiring academic normally initiates his career as a voluntary assistant, unpaid or paid on an hourly basis only, making himself useful in an institute, and largely supporting himself with such outside jobs as he can find. Even at this early stage holding several jobs is an integral part of the system. Aptly referred to as *"precarios,"* in many cases the work of these assistants is essential to the functioning of the universities. As their numbers have

[6] Sergio Bruno, "Dimensioni economiche di una riforuna universitaria," Estratto da *Economia del lavoro*, Anno II, No. 2-3, Direzione e Amministrazione: via Po. 23, Rome, 1971.

increased, the assistants are becoming a force for change. They are bringing the new ideas on the role and responsibility of the university.

Through a mixture of luck, connections, and outstanding ability, the *precarios* in time advance to become research assistants, funded either through their institutes' budgets or from money their professors obtain through research, consulting, and other sources. The assistant's advancement depends upon his relationship to the professor heading the institute, typically the professor under whom he obtained his degree. The death or retirement of one's professor can be a career disaster as the assistant no longer has a "ruler" to "carry" him higher in the system. In such a patrimonial system it is virtually inconceivable for the young academic to shift from one institute to another. Characterized by the unity of the professor and his assistants, the institute, which is normally the basic unit of the university, operates almost as a "moral family," and like a traditional family exacts loyalty and obedience from its junior members. In recent years this has included to an increased degree conformity in their political beliefs. Raiding between institutes is rare and involves only the *precarios*.

Among the problems produced by the system are inbreeding and localism. Although the main driving force is to teach in Rome or other major cities where they have more power and access to external jobs, one-third of all *ordinari* return to teach in the region where they undertook their degree studies. The members of an institute rarely have contacts with other institutes at the same university or with teaching staff in the same field at other universities unless they belong to the same "school" and share the ideology of the older and influential professors of the most prestigious institutes with respect to their discipline, the role of the university, and society. The Italian university has no faculty club or senior common room to facilitate informal contact among teaching

staff. The system also discourages assistants from going abroad to study because obtaining a job requires staying in the "family."

The above-outlined pattern, although generally valid, has many exceptions. Variations exist among the universities and between different disciplines. Institutes may be relatively unimportant at the smaller universities where they may have few or no assistants. By contrast institutes at the major universities may have a number of *ordinari* rather than a single patrimonial ruler, resembling the department in the American university or the new *Fachbereiche* in the German universities, in which the dominance of the *ordinarius* over his institute has given way to a more collegiate power structure.

Just as there is no well-defined pattern leading to a research assistantship, so there is no single system by which the assistant advances in the academic hierarchy. He may be appointed directly from an assistantship to *assistente ordinario* (a tenured teaching position in the career civil service), *professore incaricato*, or *professore ordinario*. *Incaricati*, like the *ordinari*, are autonomous in their teaching, but unlike the *ordinari* are recruited directly by a faculty rather than through a national body and do not sit in faculty councils. Until several years ago the assistant was appointed as *incaricato* for three years only and then reverted to the assistant status. Now for all practical purposes he has tenure, his term as *incaricato* after an initial two years typically being unlimited. Also, the requirement that the assistant pass national examinations for the *libera docenza* (right to teach) to be eligible to be an *incaricato* was abolished in 1969. With the increased student enrollment the position of *incaricato* is no longer a transitional status held temporarily as part of one's career pattern in becoming an *ordinari* but a semi-permanent alternative to it.

Formally, faculty recruitment for the *ordinari* is bureau-

cratic, universalistic, and democratic. Actually, it is particularistic, political, and elitist. The system provides that candidates for vacant or newly established chairs be assessed by a committee of five *ordinari* elected from among all chairholders in the discipline concerned and several related ones, and that if the chair is filled, it can be offered only to the three top candidates selected by the committee and in the order ranked by the committee.

In reality lobbying and logrolling characterize the selection process, both in the election of the committee members and in their deliberations. As the *ordinari* in one selection committee in all probability are members of other committees, and each seeks to "carry forward" his own candidate, the resultant bargaining process reflects more the relative power of the individual *ordinari* who are elected to the committees than an objective judgment on the qualifications of the candidates competing for the chair. Religious as well as political and professional "school" affiliations play a role although a record of research and publication is a *sine qua non*.

The common pattern has been for an assistant to become *incaricato* at a peripheral university while retaining close relations with the institute where he started as an assistant or even retaining his assistant status there. Then he becomes an *ordinario* at the peripheral university and with luck and appropriate support ultimately becomes an *ordinario* at one of the central universities. Throughout the process the aspiring academic is hounded by the need to supplement his university income from external sources. As already mentioned, the *precarios* are dependent on outside jobs. The *assistenti* and *incaricati*, although on the institute payroll, typically need to at least match their university stipend through moonlighting or other external occupations. Finally, the *ordinari*, in order to support an expanding body of assistants and to enhance their influence nationally, both in

their disciplines and externally, are driven to increase their financial resources by seeking an enlarging share of resource funds. This is done through outside consulting, and, in the case of disciplines such as medicine and law, by professional practice. Below is outlined the average career progression of a university teacher in the social sciences in terms of qualifications required, age, position, and salary.

The role of the professoriate in university governance and in research is discussed in later sections. Reducing the entrenched power of the "barons" was one of the chief aims of the 1969 university reform law. For example, it would have replaced institutes with departments, democratized university decision-making, and with some exceptions required faculty to teach full-time. In anticipation of the passage of the act the *ordinari* have been consolidating their position in the power structure. However, even though the reform law failed of adoption, new forces are at work that haltingly and almost imperceptibly are nonetheless beginning to weaken the old traditions and power structure of the university in Italy.

Foremost among these forces is the rapid expansion of nontenured teaching staff, especially the assistants but also the *incaricati*. Since 1960 these groups have increased at the rate of about 7 percent per year, twice the rate of growth of the *ordinari*. This rapid expansion has been accompanied by a greater diversity in the social background of assistants and *incaricati* and an erosion of the traditional patrimonial system of socializing new recruits to the academic profession. This is particularly true in the newer disciplines, such as sociology, and in faculties undergoing the most dramatic expansion of staff, such as the *Magistero* (education).

In 1959 only 22 percent of *ordinari* came from the white collar sector and only 6 percent from peasant, artisan and worker backgrounds. A 1969 study of the social mobility of

faculty documents a dramatic change in their social origins. White collar backgrounds range from 36 percent (medicine) to 50 percent (education) of all *ordinari*. Peasant, artisan and workers backgrounds now account for 19 percent (law and economics) to 46 percent (agriculture). The distribution of social background for *ordinari* does not differ significantly from that of *incaricati* and assistants.[7]

Typical Career Progression for Professor in Social Sciences

Average Age When Position Obtained	Degree Required	Position	University Salary (lire per month)	External Earnings (lire per month)
26	*dottore*	*"precarios"*	—	up to 150,000
30	*libera docenza*	assistant	150,000	150,000
35		*incaricato*	190–250,000	
40		*ordinario*	330–500,000	as high as 100 million per year
70	retirement from teaching but retain full power and salary for five more years			

Some diminution of the dependence of the *incaricati* on the *ordinari* is another new factor opening the way for change. The *incaricati* are becoming more closely affiliated with the assistants, less bound to the professors. More independent because of their position of quasi-tenure and their growing numerical strength, the *incaricati* are becoming a more powerful force. They are working at the center of the

[7] T. Salvemini (ed.), *Gli assistenti universiteri e i liberi docenti in Italia*, Instituto di Statistica, Universita di Roma, 1969.

university to broaden its role and to influence its central concerns. The younger professors are showing a greater commitment to the university. They are increasingly torn between the conflicting demands of university teaching and the traditional system of simultaneously holding outside jobs.

Making university teaching a full-time responsibility is one of the most difficult and important reforms needed, and yet probably the most strategic step of any real reform. It would require substantially higher academic salaries (including, at last, appropriate fringe benefits) to compensate professors for giving up their outside jobs. More importantly, it would demand a major reorganization of the system through which the power elite in Italian society is identified and recruited, to a considerable extent from the professoriate itself. Reform on this scale will undoubtedly require outside stimulus as the professors play a major role in national decision-making. Such a reform would require the professors to concur in the diminution of their own power. As proponents of a modified reform bill have recognized, a compromise between full-time and part-time teaching will have to be achieved. The Italian university remains among the few in Western Europe still characterized by the hegemony of full professor, but a dilution of the power of the "barons" within and outside the universities is now necessary and inevitable.

THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN RESEARCH

The limited contribution of the universities to scientific research is yet another cause for concern in any overall assessment of higher education in Italy. In contrast, for example, to the situation in the United States where the research function is often seen as antagonistic to the teaching function, the research function in Italian universities is very underdeveloped. Furthermore, the system through which funds for research are allocated to the universities both

reflects and reenforces the power of the professors most resistant to change. Without major reforms the prospects for increased university research, or for its becoming a force for change in the existing power structures, appear bleak.

The chief source of research funds to the universities is the National Research Council (*Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche* or CNR). The Council is made up of 11 commissions, each with 9 to 15 members. The commissions represent different disciplines or in some cases clusters of disciplines; Council members are mostly drawn from the professoriate. Some 70–80 percent are elected by the approximately 3,000 *ordinari* and by the 500 *professori aggregati* (they have almost the same rights as the *ordinari*);[8] another 7–10 percent are elected by the 16,000 *incaricati* and other subordinate teaching staff. Five percent are chosen by external research organizations such as the National Committee for Nuclear Energy. These members together choose another 5-10 percent of the total CNR membership through a process of cooption. For all practical purposes the *ordinari* rule the CNR. As in the case of professors chosen to serve on committees selecting the *ordinari*, those chosen as members of the CNR are likely to be the *ordinari* wielding the largest political influence.

The national government allocates funds annually to the CNR which approves a general budget and the individual budgets of each of its operating commissions. The commissions award research grants to university institutes, to individual researchers, to nonuniversity research centers, and to CNR in-house research. Although to some extent the CNR takes into account such factors as geographic distribution and the need to develop newer disciplines, the distribution and level of grants to the universities tends to correspond to the

[8] The chief difference between *ordinari* and *aggregati* is that the latter cannot vote in elections for the committees choosing new *ordinari*.

relative power of various disciplines, of university institutes, and of individual *ordinari*. Thus the system by which research funds are allocated entrenches the traditional disciplines and the existing power structure. Law receives more research funds than sociology as it has more voting power in the CNR. The central universities receive significantly more research support than do the peripheral ones. Professors successful in grantsmanship have more funds to support yet more assistants and further expand their fiefdoms. Nor has the existence of a Ministry for Research, set up several years ago to coordinate research (but with no budget to fund research), had an appreciable impact on the system.

In principle, a specified proportion of funds awarded to university institutes from outside contracts and grants for research are supposed to go to the central university administration (23 percent) and to the faculty concerned. In fact, if the funds are not channelled through the university, a situation more prevalent in medicine than in other faculties, controls may be inadequate and only the individual professor and his institute benefit, and in some cases, the professor personally.

In addition to the CNR, various other national bodies support research within and outside the universities. The National Committee for Nuclear Physics has contributed significantly since the early 1950s. Various ministries, such as Defense and Agriculture, provide funding for a range of research projects. The National Council for Nuclear Energy, financed in part by Euratom, supports a number of research centers throughout Italy. Generally, however, relatively little research is supported with funds coming from outside the country. Nor does Italy have private foundations with significant resources for the support of research.

Recent trends suggest that the research role of the universities is unlikely to expand significantly and may even be diminishing. The elimination of the requirement that

incaricati must have the *libera docendi* is said to have brought a deterioration in the quality of *incaricati*; proof of research capability is no longer required. The research output of the *incaricati* may also be diminishing, overburdened as they have become with their teaching and examining tasks. Finally, upon achieving the rank of *ordinario*, many professors may cease research activity altogether.

The financing of university research may also be shifting. In the last several years, for example, the CNR has begun to allocate some of its resources to the support of research by private firms. Since 1968, as a result of the student disruption, there has been a tendency to take research out of the universities. A few years ago CNR grants supported only about 200 researchers in nonuniversity research organizations; now some 1,200 are so supported. The fear within the universities of student criticism of the research links of university institutes with industry is driving research in some disciplines out of the universities faster than others, especially chemistry and metallurgy. In the last five years research directed by university professors but conducted outside of the university system has exceeded research financed through university budgets done under the aegis of university institutes.

In addition, the traditions, structure, and financing of the universities are not adequately equipped to train researchers. In general students pursuing the *dottore* are not called upon to do research. There being no formal post-laureate academic program, the training assistants receive as researchers and future academics depends upon the degree of specialization of the institute with which they are associated. This varies among different faculties and universities. In the interest of being multifunctional many institutes are relatively unspeciaiized, a ground for criticism by the assistants. The most specialized training is offered in medicine. Because the *dottore* in medicine involves only a general preparation,

institutes in the faculties of medicine typically offer highly specialized training in order to equip their assistants for professional practice in some specialized branch of medicine.

By contrast, in some other disciplines the universities may offer little or no research training at all. This is particularly the case with newer fields such as international relations or sociology which may have no real faculty home or are overshadowed by the more traditional subjects. In some disciplines researchers obtain their specialized post-*laurea* training in institutes which are totally separate from the universities. In some cases they hire professionals, even university professors, to give them this additional training.

To help remedy the failure of the universities to provide research training, the 1969 university reform bill provided for a new research degree (*dottorato di ricerca*) requiring an additional two years of study after the *dottore*. This proposed new degree has been strongly opposed by leftist political groups as undemocratic because it would produce two classes of university graduates. Some observers allege that it would not be feasible politically for the government to legislate such a reform.

Perhaps the chief deficiency in the universities' research role is their failure to provide a career structure for the development of researchers. The highest achievable status for an academic is to become a full professor or *ordinario*. By definition researchers remain subordinate to the *ordinari* and because of the part-time nature of university positions must supplement their salaries through outside work. Inferiority of status for researchers is endemic to the Italian university and will continue to be so as long as the chair holders dominate the system. Even though the prestige of affiliation with a university continues to be attractive, the uncertain status, the inadequacy of salaries and facilities, and the lack of a career pattern for university researchers will inhibit the contribution

of the universities to national research. A national research policy is needed which would give more priority to research, clarify and strengthen the role of researchers in the universities, and provide more direction to research in the total national development effort. Regionalization of the universities, discussed in a later section, might be one approach to this problem.

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Higher education is a tightly centralized system in Italy, regulated and directed by the Ministry of Public Instruction. University governance operates within narrow constraints, and is dominated by the *ordinari*. Major change, unlikely to be instituted from within, is more apt to result from external pressures such as national legislation, intensified student rebellion, a revolt by the *assistanti*, or some other major crisis.

At the faculty and university levels the only teaching staff entitled to participate fully in decision-making are the *ordinari*. They elect the deans of the faculties and the university rectors, in each case from among themselves. They make up the faculty councils (*consigli di facolta*) and together with the administrative council (*consiglio di amministrazione*), constitute the academic senate (*senato academico*) at each university. Even though faculties have had the option of opening the faculty councils to students and *incaricati* since a law of 1948 authorized this, and an increasing number of faculty councils have admitted students and assistants since the crisis of 1968 (but without participation in major decisions such as the appointment of professors), the student role in the councils has not been significant.

A problem in the functioning of both the faculty councils and the academic senates is their inherent inability to set

priorities. These organs operate as power-sharing rather than governing bodies. Decisions are made on the basis of a logrolling process among peer groups which in principle have equal power. In fact some are "more equal" than others, depending on which *ordinari* have the largest "fiefdoms." There is a built-in reluctance to set one group ahead of another. As a result of this self-imposed inhibition on the decision-making process, faculty councils and especially academic senates have become less and less able to function effectively and power has increasingly shifted from these bodies to the Administrative Councils at the universities. The Administrative Council is a small body including the rector and representatives of such local interests as the regional government, chamber of commerce, professors, and the Administrative Secretary, of the Ministry of Public Instruction. The Administrative Secretary, who is the head of the Administrative Council, has come to wield more power than the rector both in the Council and more broadly in the university.

However, the hegemony of the *ordinari* derives only in part from the election of deans and rectors and their dominance of faculty councils and academic senates. The power of the *ordinari* stems more from other factors: monopoly of decision-making within the institutes; control of access to the academic profession both as directors of their institutes and as members of the selection committees for new *ordinari*; shaping the research efforts of the universities through the allocation of CNR funds, and research priorities within their institutes.

Still another source of the power of the *ordinari* is the influence they exert on national higher education policy through their representation in the Superior Council (*Consiglio Superiore*), an advisory body to the Ministry of Public Instruction. The Superior Council links the academics with the political decision-making process, and its recommendations are normally implemented. It advises on such matters as

the setting up of new universities, the allocation of new full professorships, and appointments to vacant chairs. The Superior Council has no permanent professional staff, and therefore must rely on such staff work as the *ordinari* who compose it and the Ministry can provide. It thus serves more as a vehicle through which the *ordinari* have a direct impact on national policy rather than functioning as an interface between the universities and the government along the line of the British University Grants Committee. Nor does the Superior Council focus higher education policy on the concerns of industry and other economic and social interest groups, public or private. This is unlike the Conseil Supèrieur de l'Education Nationale in France which in theory has such a role even if in practice its effectiveness is yet to be proved.

The Council's system of operating through various committees representing the different disciplines tends to discourage the development of interdisciplinary studies and reenforces the dominance of the traditional disciplines. Newer fields of knowledge tend to be under-represented or in some instances not represented at all and hence may be neglected in the allocation of chairs among the different disciplines. Since recommendations of the Superior Council are not made public except in the rare event that a decision of the Ministry is challenged in the courts, the Council is free from the constraints of public accountability in its decision-making.

Like the decisions of the CNR, the recommendations of the Superior Council reflect more the relative power of the "schools" within the faculties and the past preeminence of the various disciplines rather than the present realities of student demand, the emergence of new disciplines, the changing needs of industry, or the impact of the new technology on higher education's aims and approaches. Recently, however, the Ministry has shown less inclination to follow the Superior Council's recommendations; political considerations have had an increased impact on its decision.

The power of the *ordinari* is circumscribed somewhat by complex regulations on university functioning going back to the Giolitti laws of 1896 and by the role of the Ministry of Public Instruction in university governance. The Administrative Secretary at each university occupies a post somewhat similar to that of Kurator at some German universities before the recent reforms in that country. A civil servant appointed by the Ministry of Public Instruction for an indefinite term of office, the Administrative Secretary in principle is concerned chiefly with financial transactions and assures the financial accountability of the university to the public authorities. As university costs have mounted and university revenues from land holdings and other nongovernmental sources have declined, the financial autonomy of the universities has given way to almost total dependence on the state.

With this shift the role of the Administrative Secretary has assumed new importance. Although in theory he is concerned with funding only, and not with academic policy, the interdependence of decisions on these matters has endowed this position with critical power, and all the more so as the rector's term of office is three years and the Administrative Secretary is permanent. In this connection the Administrative Secretary can play a key role in decisions because his civil service background combined with his indefinite tenure give him a competence in interpreting and implementing the huge body of complex government regulations seldom attained by a university rector.

The growing financial crisis in the universities has still other implications for university administration. Because in the last analysis the Ministry of Finance determines the financing of higher education, in a conflict relating to funding it is the Ministry of Finance rather than the Ministry of Public Instruction to which the Administrative Secretary is accountable and which has the ultimate authority.

University governance and finance reveals a dual rather

than a pluralistic system of authority. Power is divided, although with no great precision, between the *ordinari* on the one hand and the central government on the other. This statement of the situation suggests three key features of university governance in Italy. First, the universities themselves are relatively weak and decentralized internally. Second, the more significant units are the faculties and especially the institutes. And third, one of the more important elements in the operation of the system is the alliances between *ordinari* in corresponding faculties, denoted earlier as "schools," as these constitute the chief power blocks in decision-making on university affairs.

COORDINATION AND PLANNING

The systematic planning of higher education is almost nonexistent in Italy. At the level of the national parliament higher education is a political and ideological issue rather than a problem on which the various political parties are apt to achieve a nonpartisan consensus in the interests of rational planning. The fact that both the Senate's Commission on Education and the counterpart commission in the Chamber of Deputies lack permanent staff who are expert on matters of higher education is a further obstacle to serious planning for the universities by the national parliament.

Nor is the Ministry of Public Instruction appreciably better equipped for the task. While the department concerned with the universities in the Ministry has a planning bureau, its staff is too limited to gather the information and undertake the studies needed for effective planning.

Even so, the Ministry has available the means to encourage more planning than exists. Presumably it could, but does not, require the universities to submit five or more year plans. It could, but does not, set forth criteria for the granting of official recognition to new universities. The budget for higher

education is not used as an instrument for planning. Each annual budget merely conforms to those of past years with some increment for staff; there is no real budget review. The Ministry could have more influence within the universities through its appointees to the Administrative Councils of the universities, although the Ministry's representation has been largely formal to date. This reveals a curious contradiction. Theoretically, the higher education system is overcentralized, but in fact the ministry tends not to use its authority over the allocation of resources and thus reenforces the power of the *ordinari*.

At a more fundamental level the failure of the Ministry to encourage long-range planning, like the failure of the parliament to adopt university reform legislation, is a political matter. Long-range planning requires some agreement on objectives, and no such agreement exists. The precariously balanced coalition governments in Italy have been loath to risk being unseated through a major defeat on educational issues. In short, even if the Ministry and parliament had the necessary technical capacity for long-range planning, there is a considerable gap between undertaking studies of what ought to be done and the willingness and ability of the political authorities to carry out change.

No planning bodies exist between the levels of the national government and the universities. The National Council for Research is not a planning body. Neither does the Superior Council have this function. The new regional units do not yet have jurisdiction over education though higher educational administration may go this way in the future.

Within the universities themselves long-range planning is exceptional. The rector lacks the necessary authority; the Administrative Secretary focuses on day-to-day rather than long-run administration. As a federation of fiefdoms rather than an effective governing body, the Academic Senate lacks the necessary capability. At the level of the individual

university, as with the university system, there are no well-defined objectives and very little accountability.

A few exceptions do exist at individual institutions. Deliberate planning was undertaken in connection with the new University of Calabria. At the University of Bologna an impressive planning effort has been underway since 1966 to establish a new campus for science faculties and perhaps medicine outside of the ancient city. The fact that a group of professors took the initiative, that a variety of studies, largely demographic, were carried out by the Institute of Architecture at Bologna, and that the planning took into account not merely Bologna but a larger student catchment area including Parma and Modena, demonstrates that long-range planning is possible, despite the absence of a capability or disposition to plan at the national level.

Like long-range planning, coordination is obviated by a lack of consensus on objectives. What coordination in university functioning does exist is concerned with uniformity of national laws to determine salaries, academic recruitment, and curriculum. However, coordination normally occurs when the institutions in a national (or state/provincial) system have diversity and hence coordination is an instrument through which diversity and autonomy at the institutional level are balanced with comprehensiveness and central direction in the total system. At present there is no role for such coordination in Italian higher education.

PRESENT TRENDS: ELITISM TO MASS HIGHER EDUCATION

In comparing higher education in Italy with systems elsewhere, the seminar analyzed the characteristics of higher education systems as they move from an elitist orientation to mass higher education and ultimately to universal access. In

this process two major forces are impelling change and to some extent are working at cross purposes. The first is the technological needs of society requiring a higher education system that enables people to receive different kinds and amounts of post-secondary education, corresponding to their different abilities and to the varieties of occupational skills needed.

Opposing this thrust is the pressure for egalitarianism according to which all young people should have equal opportunities for higher education regardless of race, sex, tradition, or historical accident. As higher education moves from an elitist to a mass orientation, the divergent forces of technology and democracy are groping for reconciliation.

Generally, in Western Europe these two forces are increasingly reconciled by recent developments. First, changes in secondary school degree requirements have postponed and broadened the selection of those who may pursue a university degree or other post-secondary qualification. Or, to cope with the resultant sharp increase in higher education enrollment, some national systems perform a massive winnowing-out of first year university students. Or increasing numbers of students may be channelled into new specialized institutions having lower admissions standards and in some cases a shorter study period than the universities or the Polytechnics in Great Britain. Pressures for democratic access are also resulting in the enlargement of possibilities of transfer from nonuniversity to university level post-secondary education.

Much of the present difficulty in Italy can be attributed to the fact that whereas access to university has been democratized (although still only about 18 percent of the 18–24 year age group enter university), no significant efforts have been made to adapt what is an essentially elitist higher education system to the greatly enlarged and more diversified student body. In terms of the following chart, which

attempts to show schematically the topography of change in higher education as it moves from elitism to a mass orientation. Italy now finds itself in the transitional period between these two stages. As the chart indicates, the elements where such change can be pinpointed include access, curriculum teaching style, certification, purposes, finance, governance, and coordination.

	Elite	Mass
	0-15% age group	35-50% age group
Access Entry	leaving certificate of academic high school	entrance examinations
Curriculum	classical, humanist, theoretical	includes science, technology, social sciences
Teaching Style	mainly lectures and examinations	seminars, individualized instruction, computer-assisted instruction
Certification	mainly for teaching; simple degree structure	complicated system of degrees; large number of programs each with own certification
Purposes	chiefly train for the teaching profession and civil service	prepare graduates for wide variety of jobs; high degree of specialization
Finance	low-funding requirements; small percentage of GNP; substantial income from tuition and land-holdings	greatly increased costs; significant percentage GNP; need for the institutions to play active part in seeking funds; almost total dependence on public funding
Governance	oligarchy of professors; weak and limited central administration at individual institutions	decision-making includes junior staff, students, outside interests; strengthened and enlarged central administration
Public Control Coordination	regulation by central ministry; each institution acts in isolation from others	higher education coordination shifts to new semi-autonomous public bodies outside the central ministry

*Between Elite and Mass, Transitional—15-35% age group

This chart cannot be regarded as applicable worldwide because of the broad differences among the three major patterns of higher education: the Latin to which Italy belongs, the Anglo-Saxon, and the Middle European as typified by Germany. Furthermore, as a given system shifts from elitist to mass, it does so unevenly. While the chart presents ideal types, in actuality every higher education system combines elements of more than one type, typically retaining some elitist features as it moves to a mass and even universal orientation. Problems within a system typically are the result of tensions caused by these discrepancies. Thus, the Italian universities are no longer restricted to less than 15 percent of the age group, but remain mostly elitist with respect to the elements set forth in the chart.

CURRENT PROBLEMS AND THE PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE: A SUMMING UP

To solve the difficulties of Italian higher education by turning back the clock and reverting to a highly restricted admissions system is politically impossible. This being so, in analyzing the future of higher education in Italy it is essential to attempt to identify the most important current problems, the prospects for change, and the obstacles impeding efforts to adapt the system to present pressures and future needs. Among the current problems the following seem most critical.

1. The democratization of access to the universities has not been accompanied by measures to adapt their structures to handle the greatly expanded influx of students.

2. The widening gap between the career expectations of students and employment prospects for graduates generates increasing tension within the higher education system and in society at large.

3. The lack of involvement on the part of industry in higher education is paralleled by a lack of responsiveness on the part of the universities to national needs for trained manpower.

4. Such autonomous decision-making as is possible within the highly centralized state university system is monopolized by those most resistant to change and most able to effectively oppose it through their external influence in the wider society, the *ordinari*.

5. The fact that university teaching is a part-time profession produces a reward system according minimal priority to the teaching function, undermines the universities' contribution to research, and reenforces the traditionally oligarchic power structure.

6. The lack of differentiation among higher education institutions and the obstacles to diversity in educational programs within them effectively prohibit change through experimentation and the testing of new approaches.

7. At no level has long-range planning been institutionalized through which future goals for higher education can be defined or the current functioning of the universities measured by or directed toward these goals.

8. Due to tightly centralized state regulation of the universities little significant reform is possible without government initiative; the precariousness of the coalition governments typical to post-World War II Italy has effectively inhibited or stymied any such initiative.

Difficult as these problems appear, some shifting of attitudes within and outside the university community, away from past rigidities, and a greater awareness of the direction reform must take to avoid a total breakdown of the system,

offer some potential for change. In addition the perennial lack of data on which university planning and reform must be based is at last being remedied through efforts within and outside the system.

Although industry recruits few graduates and its interest in the universities has so far been narrowly circumscribed, this is changing. There is a growing awareness that for industry to be more efficient, society needs more educated people with skills and abilities. Even though the demands of industry for trained people is now limited—and industry trains the people it needs through private schools operated by the industrial enterprises themselves—industry's needs may be a force for change in higher education in the future.

The trend toward regionalization may also become a force for change—although not necessarily for the good—if individual regions pursue university development in their areas more for political and prestige reasons than to strengthen university education *per se*. The scheme for regionalizing the universities set forth in a study recently prepared by a working party for the Planning Bureau of the Ministry of Public Instruction offers one possible approach to achieve both regionalization and inter-university coordination within the regions. This scheme would divide Italy into 6 geographic regions having 13 separate university systems and under these some 22 sub-systems, with planning and coordination undertaken at both of these levels. However, it would seem to have one major weakness, namely that inter-university coordination would be strictly voluntary. Other models for regionalizing the universities should also be explored, recognizing the complementarity of regional and university needs. Available evidence suggests that economic, social, and political forces for change may be more dynamic at the regional than at the national level.

Regionalization would presumably contribute to more

diversity and experimentation within the universities. Occasional attempts at experimentation by individual university institutes or faculties, so far generally discouraged by the Ministry of Public Instruction, suggest that allowing more autonomy to the universities could be a force for change and diversity within the system. It would in all probability produce more competition among the institutions and permit them to try out different approaches in program development and other areas.

The experience of other countries, however, suggests that increased autonomy and competition may result not only in greater diversity within the system, as is now developing in the French university system, but also in greater inequality among universities. Greater autonomy can also be an obstacle to change in permitting individual institutions to refuse to innovate or to adapt old structures to new needs. Increased autonomy should therefore be balanced with the maintenance of enough external power to change the system from outside, and with a reserve power to maintain some equality of standards in the system. If, as is apparently contemplated, the new reform law to be submitted to parliament does indeed accord more autonomy to the universities, the result may be a greater diversity in the system and more freedom for individual institutions to identify and respond to a range of needs—national, regional, and even local.

Some modifications in the universities are beginning to take place as a result of the increase in teaching staff in the last few years to cope with the expanded enrollments and the fact that the *incaricati* now have what amounts to tenure. The numbers of assistants and *incaricati* have expanded to the point where the power of *ordinari* over them has begun to diminish. Both groups, including the *precarios*, are manifesting greater concern for the teaching responsibilities of the university. Also, the last few years have seen the emergence of a stronger sense of affiliation between the

assistants and *incaricati*, stronger perhaps than the bond between the full professors and the *incaricati*. The *incaricati* are also becoming more independent, partly as a result of their expanded numbers, partly because of their tenured status. The *incaricati* are becoming a force working at the center to liberalize and democratize the system.

Even among the *ordinari* changes can be detected which may ultimately help reshape the universities. Among some of the younger professors, for example, there seems to be a greater sense of commitment to the universities; some are troubled by the conflict in their role as university teachers on the one hand and the traditional expectation that they hold outside jobs on the other.

At the level of the students some changes can be spotted which encourage optimism regarding the prospects for constructive action. Since the 1968 crisis student interest has broadened. Students are less dogmatic and manifest more concern about the universities and the quality of teaching. They are more responsive now than five years ago to the efforts of teachers to do a conscientious job of teaching. Their energies and concern, if appropriately tapped, could be useful in implementing university reform.

Still another force for change may be the eventual raising of elementary school teacher training to the post-secondary level. The incorporation of teacher training in the universities has been one of the most pronounced trends in Europe in the last 20 years. When this happens in Italy, as it eventually must, the impact in terms of increased enrollments and pressures on the entire university system may force radical adaptations to include this new function.

Notwithstanding the emergence of various forces for change, a number of factors still deter reform efforts aimed at making the university system a more effective instrument

of social policy. Foremost among them are the dominance of decision-making by the *ordinari* which has already been elaborated upon, the disinclination of governments to press for reform, the absence of any innovative institutions to serve as models for change, and the failure to use the high degree of centralized authority over the universities to mandate change.

The disinclination of government to press for reform seems almost endemic in Italy. However, considering that since World War II the average lifespan of governments in Italy has been only one year, it is hardly surprising that they have not pressed for reforms which they are not apt to be in office long enough to implement successfully. Political parties have therefore not been a force for change in the higher education system in Italy.

In some higher education systems the existence of one or more institutions more innovative than the others has tended to encourage change in the total system. For example, in Great Britain, Sussex and Lancaster have had a role in "contaminating" the system. On the other hand, Konstanz in Germany and Vincennes in France, despite their efforts to innovate, have not effectively catalyzed change nor been regarded as successful models for innovation in their respective higher education systems. On balance it appears that the functional distribution of power in the total system tends more to repress innovation than does the existence of a single innovative institution move the system toward change. In this connection Italy has not had a Sussex or Vincennes, and whatever impact the new University of Calabria has in encouraging other universities to innovate remains to be seen.

In a centralized higher education system such as that in Italy, a single university may be ineffective in bringing about change, but the fact of centralization can facilitate change. In France it was the high degree of central control over the

universities by the Ministry for National Education which made the 1968 Faure reform mandating decentralization possible. However, to achieve change in a centralized system the central authorities require a set of future goals and the will to move the system toward them. While the planning bureau concerned with the universities in the Ministry of Public Instruction has recently become more active in attempting to define future goals, this effort has so far not produced results.

THE BALANCE SHEET: CONCLUSIONS

Higher education in Italy is under considerable tension, although its dimensions may appear more formidable to the outsider than they actually are. To the extent that it makes change inevitable, the existence of tension may even be a plus. Current pressures are too great for the present system to continue as it is. Among the sources of pressure are the bursting classrooms and laboratories, overburdened and part-time professors, confused students, high drop-out rates, unemployed and under-employed graduates, increasingly impotent university governance, diminishing university research, the neglect of new fields of knowledge, relative disinterest on the part of industry in the universities, and the virtual nonexistence of any long-range planning in higher education.

Do these problems call for dramatic reforms or would gradual change be sufficient and in the long run more effective? For some 25 years Italy has shown itself capable of defusing crises without undertaking radical solutions. Incremental change fits the Italian style. Experience elsewhere has shown that radical change can be so destabilizing as to be destructive or useless. However, a series of small changes in the absence of an overall plan can overload the decision-making circuit. Sooner or later a system to determine

priorities must be established; also it becomes essential to identify those few elements in the system whose alteration would set off waves that might reshape the system to fit future priorities.

Designing a blueprint for university reform in Italy is clearly no easy task. However, any serious attempt to define the future map of higher education in Italy should focus, in the first instance, on the decision-making process. It should be broadened in two major respects: first, a wider range of interests should be heard from in day-to-day decision-making; and second, the time frame should be expanded so that today's decisions could be related more closely to future objectives. More specifically, the traditional oligarchic power structure should be replaced by a system of shared power enabling junior teaching staff, assistants, and students to have an in-put on university decision-making while a system for long-range planning is instituted. While bringing about these two changes may be a formidable task, these two reforms would give to decision-making the breadth and perspective now required if higher education is to be more responsive to national needs than has been the case in the past.

APPENDIX

Guest Experts at Rome Seminar

Francesco Clemente, professor of architecture, Faculty of Engineering, University of Bologna
Pierpaolo Giglioli, researcher, Istituto Cattaneo, Bologna
Umberto Gori, professor of international relations, Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Florence
Giovanni Gozzer, director, European Center for Education, Frascati
Silvino Grussu, Education Department, Institute for Economic Planning, Rome
Franco Karrer, professor of urban design, Faculty of Architecture, University of Reggio Calabria
Gianni Livi, Common Press Service, EEC, Brussels
Pierluigi Malesani, technical assistant to the rector, University of Calabria, Cosenza
Gino Martinoli, industrial consultant, Milan
Guido Martinotti, professor of sociology, Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Milan
Francesco D'Onofrio, professor of constitutional law, Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Teramo
Stefano Silvestri, Institute for International Affairs, Rome
Gianni Statera, professor of methodology of social research, Faculty of Teacher Training, University of Rome

*NUMERUS CLAUSUS** AGGRAVATES AN UNJUST SELECTION

Guido Martinotti

Guido Martinotti is professor of sociology at the University of Milan and executive secretary of the International Sociological Association. He was a guest expert at the Rome seminar. Mr. Martinotti's article, which appeared in the Italian newspaper, Il Giorno, *was one in a series on a new look at Italian universities.*

The saying that each people have the government they deserve can also apply to the university. And today, finally, we are deciding whether the Italians deserve the university system of a civilized country or not. For some time, in fact, the rate of advanced schooling, that is, the percentage of young people who are admitted to the university, has been one of the most commonly used indicators in international confrontations to evaluate the degree of social advancement of a nation.

(James A.) Perkins and (Robert O.) Berdahl, two American researchers, have proposed a scheme in which, based on the

**Numerus clausus* is an approach to educational planning that adapts the number of places to the demand for graduates and the number of students to the number of places. It corresponds to the manpower planning approach.

rate of schooling, we can isolate three types of universities: the systems "of the elite" which serve 5 to 10 percent of the youth; the systems "of transition" which serve 10 to 20 percent and the systems "of the masses" which serve over 20 percent of the youths of university age. Each of these types has, aside from national differences, similar characteristics and problems: the Italian university system a few years ago came out of the group of systems "of the elite" and is now entering the group of those of "the transition." Still, in regard to this, we must say that the Italian university has known an undoubted numerical development, but this development has not been, either in absolute terms, or in relative terms, very different from that of other countries comparable to Italy, as we see clearly from statistics recently published by the OECD.

But above all we must remember that, as with all scholastic systems, the university and to the greatest degree, the Italian one—is a complex machine of social selection, through which the dominant class, and the "intelligentsia" in particular, perpetuate themselves.

The "*DeAmici*" image so dear to conservatives who prize the meritorious and reject the incapable, is a myth which has not withstood analysis of data accumulated in a long and consolidated tradition of social studies.

Social selection operates in ways which can be isolated and measured with precision: first of all, admitting to the university only those few people recruited from certain social groups, then, directing the different groups toward certain departments rather than others and, finally, retarding the way of some and eliminating others from the race.

Someone observing the social composition of those admitted to Italian universities with a cold statistical eye must conclude that if the Constitution recognizes the right to

study "of the meritorious and capable even if they lack means," society does exactly the opposite and admits to the university "those with the means even if they lack the capability and the merit." In fact, while professionals and businessmen represent 1.4 percent and white collar, middle class workers represent 12.7 percent, that is, in all about a seventh of the total Italian population, their children occupy two-thirds of the places in the university system. For the workers, 85.9 percent of the population, the university reserves only one place out of seven.

Even for those who enter, the university reserves very different treatments; there are tracks reserved for the upper, the middle, and the lowest classes: departments which lead to profitable and well-defined professions, like medicine and law; those which give only a generic title, good for many uses, or for none, such as liberal arts and the departments of the economics-sociology group. In the first the children of the businessmen and independent professionals have been constantly augmented in the last few years while the children of the workers have decreased; in the second, exactly the opposite is happening.

Finally, mechanisms of selection exist which operate through delays and expulsions. In the Italian university about one entrant out of two drops out, while only one out of five completes his studies in the prescribed time; one out of three students receive their diplomas three or more years late. Even here, however, the class differences are enormous. According to a study of the Banca d'Italia, out of 100 children of businessmen and independent professionals who enter the Italian school system, 37 are placed at the university and 19 graduate. Out of 100 children of workers, however, only 2 enter the university and only 0.50 succeed in graduating. Finally, we must remember that among the students who work, only 1 out of 10 succeed in finishing in the prescribed

time, while 50 percent finish, if at all, three or more years late.

These facts must be recalled only because today the supporters of the "closed number" have conveniently set them aside. Certainly, the exploding universities, devaluation of the diploma, intellectual unemployment, and finally, all the spectres which have been brought to our attention, are some of the real contradictions of our university, and not only ours. However, to be able to speak honestly of remedies, one must keep in mind the characteristics of the Italian university that I mentioned above and, first of all, not forget that in a university so brazenly selective as ours, the only possibility of a minimum of democratization consists in a broadening of the social base from which the students are recruited. And it is, in fact, that which has happened in the last few years, even if in a limited amount, permitting, perhaps, of 100 children of workers, one graduate instead of one half.

If, in spite of the modesty of the transformation, one imputes the responsibility of all of the current ills of the university to the increase of schooling, it is because one wants to cut the legs of the growing child instead of lengthening his clothes. This is because one conveniently forgets that intellectual unemployment is also produced by a lack of economic development and by the fact that the social pyramid remains too narrow at the apex, and that the devaluation of the diploma derives above all from the scarcity of resources invested in the institution of the university.

The chorus of recent exponents of the "closed number" in the socialist systems arising from the most improbable conservative elements deliberately ignores the facts: that in those systems "the closed number" is an integral part of a planned economy; that those who don't enter the university get jobs (while in Italy no such guarantee exists); that several

means have been adopted to counterbalance a social selection; and that, in spite of all this, the plague of the use of connections to pass admission exams is recognized as one of the serious social problems of those systems.

It would be interesting to know if the Liberal party official who declared that in several foreign universities "the closed number is already a reality" would be willing to pass a regulation, similar to that operating in Poland, which gives priority access first of all to "children of the stacanovisti, to the children of workers, and to the children of the members of cooperatives." But it is certainly not the idea of those who now impose the "closed number" to remedy a difficult situation or to theorize about it as a general remedy. The idea is, instead, only to resolve the problems with the touch of a pen, making the poorer social groups pay the social costs of mistakes made in the past, and to defend the constituted interests, without modifying the university structure.

It is certain, anyway, that if one were to adopt the "closed number," among the future draft (group) of graduates—that is, the future executive class—there would be children of businessmen and professionals in abundance, but not even that half a child more of the worker who managed to enter in those years, on the wave of a collective illusion that Italy was becoming an advanced country and deserved a more democratic university.

WHAT DO AMERICANS THINK?

Paola Coppola Pignatelli

Paola Coppola Pignatelli, professor of urban design at the University of Rome, was a principal participant at the Rome seminar. Mrs. Pignatelli's analysis of the seminar appeared in the Italian magazine L'Espresso, *October 15, 1972.*

The malaise of the Italian universities has been for a long time a subject of deep concern. Professors, teachers, sociologists and political figures have attempted to throw light on various aspects of it, immediate and long range. The university has become a "parking lot" for secondary school graduates in search of work while the growing number of graduates are producing increasing unemployment (in '68 about 20 percent of university graduates looked for a job for more than 18 months, and after 30 months 18 percent were still unemployed). The Italian education system is a Harlequin, a slave to itself. Self-perpetuation, in fact, constitutes one of its predominating characteristics (41 percent of all graduates go into teaching). University buildings are exploding under the pressure of a breathtaking increase of enrollments which has dramatically outpaced expansion of the physical structure. In fact, of the 4,000 billion lire needed to cope with expansion demands by 1980, it seems certain under the best conjectures that not more than 1,500 will be spent for this.

The higher education structure would have remained frozen for many years if the unfruitful attempts at major reform had not been supplemented by the enactment of limited regulations or "*leggine*", a moderate expedient to surreptitiously overcome otherwise insurmountable difficulties. With the large numbers of new entrants to the universities, the professors, most of whose time must now be directed to examinations, will become suffocated. The staff-student ratio by now has reached 1/60. The feudal model of university organization tends to obstruct change. Available teaching and other resources are demonstrably inadequate for the rapid renovation of the culture. Research is almost nonexistent. How can the Italian educational system survive? How can it be renovated effectively? What are potential sources of innovation? What are the major obstacles hindering a positive development in higher education?

The Academician Under Scrutiny

To these types of questions, an international organization unexpectedly attempted to give an answer; the International Council for Educational Development, headquartered in New York, organized a seminar recently held in Rome on the "Emerging System of Higher Education in Italy." The seminar presented us with the unusual feature of an outside point of view, and was useful inasmuch as it allowed us to examine with detachment our intricate system.

The Americans observed with interest the state of our universities and the emerging variations in our education system. With what intention? It is not the first time that international organizations have attempted to undertake special studies in various countries. For example, this year the Institute of International Studies of the University of California sent a lengthy questionnaire to Italian university institutions (also French and English) as part of a survey on the structure and training of teaching staff and on the views of professors concerning the problems of the universities.

But the proposals of the Council are less academic and more operational. The International Council for Educational Development was established in 1970, and is supported by the Ford Foundation, the World Bank and UNICEF. It is concerned with educational problems on the international level. One of the problems which most interested the chairman of the Council, James Perkins, was that of higher education in various countries of the world. From here started comparative research on various national higher education systems. Italy was deliberately the initial focus of the program; a European country with characteristics falling between those of the most highly developed and of the underdeveloped countries. The seminar in Rome was thus only the first of a series of systematic investigations that will produce a worldwide picture of higher education and will identify models and internationally valid comparative parameters. The Council would then become automatically an international consulting body for planning and operating higher educational systems and for training managers for these systems.

The Rome seminar did not happen spontaneously, but was part of a multifaceted and carefully designed approach. First of all it sought to examine the overall problems of the university: proposals of reform to the relations with the political world; problems of physical expansion to those of regional decentralization; relations of the university with the entire educational system, with the working world, with research, and with finance. An intensive 10-day program of work (typically American with only a brief break for lunch) was made possible through the collaboration of the Rui Foundation and the participation of some twenty Italian experts in higher education, sociology and planning, and of representatives of the ministries and of public institutions interested in the problem.

What is the "Model of Rome?"

What the seminar produced was a kind of prescription for Italian higher education to sort out its ailing elements, to

cure its tissues, to reproduce the healthy cells. In contrast to the many meetings held on education that treat specific or limited problems, this seminar had the quality of initiating a global discourse on a large scale. Through an informal approach, but with the aid of precise data, the problem of higher education was examined as a "complex system" on which external forces and internal forces interact. The seminar did not in fact regard the higher education system in terms of a fixed structure but in relation to the general educational system and as part of an intricate system of dynamic relationships in the wider society.

To deal with a problem of such complex dimensions, the seminar subdivided the subject into a series of limited topics to be dealt with in successive sessions bringing together no more than ten persons each. The data and the information thus collected were then organized into a comprehensive pattern along lines elaborately worked out in advance, and defined as the "Model of Rome." This model will constitute the framework for a systematic analysis of the evolution of higher education and for a comparative analysis of national systems. By categorizing the various types of higher education (elite, transitional, mass, etc.) and by identifying the basic features of higher education systems within this overall scheme (finance, structure, didactic methodology), one is able to sort out more easily the optimum features of higher education at different stages and their needs and weak points.

Rather than await the results of the Rome seminar, and the others to follow, it is worthwhile to point out the more general observations that emerged. The seminar dealt with observations patently already known to us (certainly not discovered!) which, however, seen in the context of an international comparison, assume a particular significance. The first observation was that the Italian higher education system, very different from many others, is not a "system" but a conglomeration of autonomous institutions, which tend

to self-replication according to a sclerotic model. Secondly, the so-called "system" of Italian higher education is "characterized by a most powerful element of inertia," its structure depending in large measure on a closed cycle (self-feeding and lacking contact with and feed-back from the wider society).

This state of affairs suggests that higher education in Italy today is little inclined to change; there are few signs of innovating progress, very few real innovations. Where then can one find the seeds of renovation? An analysis one by one of the forces that might impel a substantial reform of the system makes clear that for various reasons the forces favoring significant change are inadequate. Let us examine them in order.

The Democracy and the "Professocracy"

First, political strength. Even though the parties are usually interested in the education problem, the uneasy political balance that characterizes Italy between the conservative and the liberal and between centralization and decentralization, does not today allow the development of the forces necessary to achieve a major reform in the education system.

Second, the teaching body. With the shift in the Italian universities from meritocracy toward authentic democracy, one finds today in Italy a "Prophocracy" or "Professocracy." The *ordinario* professors in fact still hold all the power. The feudal structure has tended over the years to reproduce itself—an organization in airtight compartments, of diffused practices, of blurred identity—because of the absence of effective power at the various levels of the hierarchy. The teaching body is divided. On the one side are the tenured professors who together with disillusioned subordinates have resigned into nostalgia and are hostile to change. On the other side is a younger and more optimistic group, the assistants and *incaricati*, who are interested in innovation and experimentation and in some cases even advocate total change.

Third, the students. After the rebellions of recent years, the students seem today a muffled strength, and only potentially active in pressing for fundamental changes. The majority seek a credential, even if unaccredited, for reasons of "social promotion." Only a small minority, albeit growing in strength, want a genuine reform of the education system, rather than urge it as a pretext for the revolution.

The Industries Do Not Believe in Degrees

Fourth, the working world, in particular the industries. Contrary to what occurs in many other countries, Italian industries seem to have little interest in the problems of higher education, limiting themselves to applying their own selective criteria to degree recipients. However, the post-university schools through which industries meet their internal training needs are today in a crisis. Hence it is possible that the enlarging roles of labor and industry will intensify the demand for university reform (even though one would then have to evaluate what in this would be constructive).

Fifth, the public administration. If, known as they are for tradition and structure, bureaucracies everywhere in the world are averse to change, one must recognize that some functionaries in Italy favor at least partial renovation of higher education, and support the adoption of new educational techniques and modern experimentation. However, the bureaucracy in general tends to be shortsighted and arbitrary in implementing regulations.

In conclusion, provided one admits that the prospects for change in the higher education system depend on the forcefulness of the internal and external tensions operating on the system, one must reluctantly conclude that, despite shifts in social, political and demographic factors, our education system is not at present subjected to truly profound and real tensions. An analysis of the diverse forces

involved shows that the resulting tensions are submerged under pressures for conformity, pressures which enable collective forces to dominate individual interests and neglect the need for scientific and cultural progress. The forces for positive development at present can only be found among the students and the teaching body, and perhaps in the public sector.

The pessimistic conclusion of the seminar was certainly not unexpected. A global change in Italian higher education appears remote. However, some adjustment may be possible or even probable in a few sectors: the introduction of new audiovisual techniques; modification of study periods; permanent or continuing education; perhaps a televised university. These are the chief modifications which now seem compatible with the political balance existing today in Italy.

Who Will Be Able to Change the Post-Secondary System?

A comparison of Italy's higher educational systems with that of other countries perhaps reveals that the Italian situation is no worse than many others. The American university itself, as we know, is undergoing major change. If it is true that the university is a central institution and fountain of innovation and knowledge, the situation in Italy presents a grave problem. Nor can one ignore it in the expectation of a spontaneous evolution. The most serious obstacle impeding reform in Italian higher education is not so much the absence of clearly defined strategy to bring about reform as the traditional adaptability or even acceptance of crisis in our country as an inherent and inalienable evil. To catalyze change there is no alternative but to increase existing tensions. Today these are still too feeble to instigate a true reform.

WHERE IS UNIVERSITY PLANNING?

Giampaolo Bonani

Giampaolo Bonani, former director of the research office of the Rui Foundation, Rome, was a principal participant at the Rome seminar. Mr. Bonani is an independent consultant in education working mainly for the Planning Bureau of the Italian Ministry of Education on higher education planning and policies. He is also a consultant to the International Council for Educational Development on its program in Western Europe.

Dov'è la pianificazione universitaria? The Italian participants were asked this question by their American colleagues in the course of the Rome seminar but we were not able to give a definitive or encouraging answer. The system of higher education in Italy—it was said ironically that it might be better to speak of the nonsystem—is substantially nonarticulated. It is growing with the logic of spontaneous development, without any consistent guidance by authorities to bridle the contradictory phenomena of its quantitative expansion.

Mrs. Burn's report on the seminar discussions is a faithful mirror of the situation of "continual crisis" to which the Italian university is subject. Notwithstanding a few optimistic observations in the concluding chapter, the report is substantially pessimistic regarding the possibility of success of any

effort at planning university education in Italy. As this conviction is confirmed by most of the Italians who participated in the meeting, the report is not merely a personal interpretation of its author.

Since 1945, planning in Italy has been lacking in all sectors and levels of education.[1] There has been a paradoxical development of central authority—the Ministry of Education. While it controls all the financial and normative instruments for carrying out, if not planning, at least efficient coordination, the Ministry has limited itself to distribution of funds, thereby giving itself a single job: caring for an annual budget unsuited to the needs of program planning.[2]

Obviously the reasons for the absence of planning in the field of education are very complex and are related to the general political equilibrium of the country. However, no one during the '50s and '60s suspected that the "educational complex" would appear as socially relevant as it has at the beginning of this decade.

By 1975 we will have over 10 million students. The corps of teachers at the various levels has reached almost 700,000, which constitutes a large segment of public employment. Above all, it is significant that the increase in the student population is accompanied by a decrease in the working population.

The political choices which stimulate and guarantee the continuation of instruction for the younger generations have

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[1] Before the Second World War the fascist government had a strict ideological control on schools, but there was no specific form of educational planning.

[2] The Ministry of Education has been so far directed by members of the Catholic-oriented party. In order to promote social pluralism, they have always favored the intervention of private groups or associations in the field of education (especially for teachers formation and training).

had a direct influence, therefore, on the social balance of the country. The phenomenon of unemployment of secondary and university graduates described in the seminar report is an example of this influence. Studies on Italian education say that expanding instruction for ages 18 to 24 means putting young people in a "parking lot," thereby keeping them out of the job market, already clogged and incapable of absorbing them. Since 1968 the university has been a major contributor to the enlargement of the intellectual "parking lot." Enrollment has increased at an annual rate fluctuating between 11 and 14 percent; the total university population soared from 289,000 in 1965 to 635,000 in 1972. Projections for 1975 indicate a further increase to 920,000 students.

The level of mass higher education, established in the model that seminar participants considered (15 percent of the age class), has been reached with surprising rapidity. Today more than 18 percent of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 attend Italian universities. The forecasts for 1980 speak of 1,1000,000 registrations, or about 23 percent of university-age youth.

As was mentioned, the financing of this complex machine is completely in the hands of the government. The increase of expenses in the educational sector is as staggering as the eruption of the demand for education. The average cost per student at the different levels is rising rapidly, while the total budget of the Ministry of Education is expected to pass from 1,956 billion lire (U.S. dollars–approximately 3,290 million) in 1969 to 3,845 billion (U.S. dollars–approximately 6,408 million) in 1976, an increase of 78 percent–an annual rate of 8.6 percent per year.[3] This figure in 1976 would absorb 33

[3] These figures are taken from *The Proposals for the New School Plan 1972-76*, mentioned in the text. Forecasts of expenditures by the Ministry of Education showing less increases have been made by the Institute for Economic Planning (ISPE) within the Ministry of Budget.

percent of public expenditures in Italy, reaching 5 percent of the GNP. The university sector can expect the highest increase of expenditures within this total budget: from 214 billion lire (U.S. dollars–356 million) in 1969 to 570 billion (U.S. dollars–950 million) in 1976, an average yearly increase of 15 percent.

Faced with these figures and with the apparent impotence of planners, a question emerges: are the problems of higher education in Italy such that they make impossible *per se* any definition of long-range projects for improvement and reform of all or part of the system?

The quantitative aspects of the educational crisis in Italy, as we have seen, are not very different from those of other industrial countries, especially in Western Europe. But that is not the point. Rather, there are factors linked to the nature of the Italian social system, to the structure and quality of our technological and industrial development, that impose *de facto* a laissez-faire policy at the same time that programmed intervention is urgent to a solution.

The seminar report has carefully cataloged the opinions of Italian experts on the problem of institutional and political "bottlenecks" that in ten years have blocked not only the approval of any laws regarding university reform, but also the utilization of the means provided by the Ministry of Education for promoting educational innovation and research in the individual universities. The coalition of interests that governs the university favors the establishment of oligarchies of professors and systematic wastage of scarce resources. At a meeting that followed the Rome seminar[4] it was noted that if a challenge arises within the system of higher education

[4] The meeting was held in Rome on the 11th of December 1972, with the participation of some members of the seminar discussing the report of the July seminar.

regarding innovation, there is no political authority willing or able to cope with it.

Why then do we continue to speak of *pianificazione* in Italian higher education? The reason lies in the fact that some things are changing. The lack of data which until recently made any attempt at planning difficult has been partially remedied. In the university there is a new academic breed that has had international experience and is substantially more democratic than the preceding generation. Outside the university there is a growth of study centers, even public ones, and of individual experts capable of evaluating situations and proposing solutions that are not within the reach of academic and ministerial bureaucracy.

Besides this, those responsible for the educational system and the universities are in daily communication with national and international institutions–social, economic, technological–that normally use the data and information that are a prerequisite for effective planning.

Finally, in 1970 the regions were created as new political institutions. In the exercise of their powers, they seek to regulate educational as well as social and economic matters. All of these developments, combined with social pressures deriving from the expansion of university structures, create a demand for educational planning. And someone has to act, sooner or later, even in a diverse, traditionalist country like Italy.[5] The most recent projects relating to the future of the

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[5] The think-tanks that can influence the structure of higher education in Italy are mainly two: the Planning Bureau of the Ministry of Education, acting together with the Department of Higher Education of the same Ministry; the Institute for Economic Planning (ISPE), within the Ministry of Budget. Among private bodies the Center for Studies of Social Investment (CENSIS) of Rome is producing the systematic study of our educational problems. The basic data for quantitative analysis are provided by the National Institute for Statistics (ISTAT).

The regions are organizing local services for studies and planning in education. In some of the wealthy northern regions these are already active.

university are: *The Proposals for the New School Plan 1972–1976*, by the Technical Committee of Planning of the Ministry of Education; *The Preliminary Project on Education and Training*, prepared in the framework of the National Economic Plan 1972–1976; and finally, the recent report (June 1972) of the *Ad Hoc Commission on University Programming and Territorial Planning*. The latter is to be the basic document for a three-way conference in 1973 of the Ministry, the regions, and the university on planning higher education. The content of these official documents was discussed in the course of the Rome seminar: the objection that was raised is that they are not political action, but "paper," not likely to influence the future of higher education in this country. Again, however, it is evident that the government and the parliament will not suddenly be attracted by complex, long-range designs created by planners, even in the field of higher learning. The history of the never-coming university reform is the story of ten years of Italian Machiavellianism.

Realistically speaking, many of the problems discussed in this article cannot be solved by ordinary administration. They tend to become continuous, critical problems of both university and society and to assume proportions that cannot be resolved by current methodologies of bureaucratic management. Reforming post-secondary education in order to cope explicitly with employment problems of degree holders cannot be reached through a fragmentary, casual approach. Comprehensive educational planning requires agreement of broad principle on the social purposes of higher learning as they relate to general education, vocational training, and work. Priorities must be established so that increased post-secondary resources can be efficiently allocated in ways that promote diversification of the university system and foster regional and functional relationships among the existing and new centers of higher learning.

Here is where documents such as the ones we have just

mentioned assume an anticipatory and decisive function. Every type of planning needs its guidelines, its preliminary experiments. For higher education planning, all of this already exists in Italy. The complex of higher education institutions, following the hypothesis of experts, can become a system in itself with meaningful, coordinated relationships.

Perhaps the time is near when those who deal with educational planning in this country will no longer be considered "unarmed prophets." The test in any case will come between 1975 and 1980. We can hope that then it will be possible to call a new Rome seminar, with an equally high level group of American and Italian participants, and with the same concern to know the answer to the question *Dov'*è la pianificazione universitaria?

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